

## Special Analysis

### YUGOSLAVIA:

#### Prospects for the Conflict

*The fighting in Slovenia marks the effective end of the Yugoslav state. Whatever the next stage in the country's tortuous political evolution, a watershed has been passed, and all parties increasingly recognize that nothing resembling the state that Tito left his successors can be resurrected.* [REDACTED]

The last remnants of the structure of federal civilian authority have been swept away, no less by the actions of the Yugoslav National Army than by the doings of Serbs, Slovenes, and Croats:

- The ability of the Army's constitutional commander in chief, the collective federal Presidency, to regain its authority is dubious; even though the impasse on the election of Croat representative Stjepan Mesic to its chairmanship has been broken, the Presidency remains deeply divided.
- Both federal Prime Minister Markovic and Foreign Minister Loncar have conceded that the Army has been acting on its own.
- Military spokesmen have taken to speaking in the name of the Supreme Military Command, driving the point home.
- Markovic himself lacks legitimacy and power; he owes his position to a Communist-controlled Federal Assembly that totally lacks legitimacy of its own [REDACTED]

#### Croats, Serbs Hold the Key

The leaders of the national republics and the Army commanders will determine the future of Yugoslavia. The current focus on Slovenia notwithstanding, Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic and Croatia's Franjo Tudjman are the keys to peaceful resolution of Yugoslavia's problems. They lead the two largest and most antagonistic of Yugoslavia's nationalities, and the large Serb minority in Croatia gives them a stark choice between conflict and compromise. Any lasting settlement between them, however, would require an exchange of people or territory, not only in Croatia itself but in ethnically mixed Bosnia and Hercegovina, which lies between Serbia and Croatia. [REDACTED]

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A settlement would also require the acquiescence of the Army, but, because it is increasingly independent and sees itself as the last guardian of the Yugoslav state, it will not automatically endorse a deal that is acceptable to Milosevic, although the officer corps is predominantly Serb and generally sympathetic to the Serb cause. Many officers blame Milosevic for inflaming the nationalist passions that have torn Yugoslavia apart and may have no inclination to defer to him. Moreover, he has no legal claim to authority over the Army.

If the Army does not support a political deal, however, its only alternative is to hold the Yugoslav state together by force. This would inevitably bring it into conflict with Croatia, Slovenia, and probably with Bosnia and Hercegovina and Kosovo. The Army, itself made up of various ethnic groups, is not likely to survive such a test; even the relatively limited conflict in Slovenia has witnessed desertion or surrender by more than half of the troops directly involved, according to official Slovenian claims.

#### Dim Prospects

A conflict of this kind probably would quickly become a full-blown civil war, pitting Serbs and Montenegrins against the other nationalities. The Army would become an essentially Serb force as Croats, Slovenes, Albanians, and other nationalities dropped from its ranks and Serbs mobilized. This has already begun to happen.

Yugoslavia's only real choice appears to lie between a radical restructuring along lines genuinely acceptable to all parties and a prolonged and bloody conflict on the Lebanese model. A constructive outcome will be hard to achieve; even if the principals recognize the dangers that confront them, the blood already shed has deepened the cleavages and made compromise that spans them even harder to imagine.

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